"HALF A HERO"
60¢
U.K. 20p
NO. 346
APRIL
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BAT MAN
YOU'RE MAD, TWO-FACE!
THIS IS CARRYING YOUR SPLIT-PERSONALITY TOO FAR!
BUCKLER & GIORDANO

BAT MAN
"HALF A HERO..."
CREATED BY BOB KANE
OF ALL THE INMATES IN ARKHAM ASYLUM HE IS PERHARS THE STRANGEST -- AND MOST INCORRIGIBLE.
IN THE HALF-LIGHT OF HIS CELL, HE SITS MOODILY FLIPPING A COIN... OVER AND OVER... AS HE HAS FOR MONTHS, AS HE HAS FOR YEARS.
TWO-FACE... I HEAR THE PAROLE BOARD TURNED DOWN YOUR REQUEST FOR TRANSFER TO A HALFWAY HOUSE!
GUESS YOU'LL BE VISITING WITH US A WHILE LONGER--
--SAY, ANOTHER THIRTY YEARS! HAHAHA!
GERRY CONWAY writer
DON NEWTON + FRANK CHIARAMONTE artists
BEN ODA - letterer
ADRIENNE ROY - colorist
DICK GIORDANO editor

BATMAN, (USPS 045-340), Vol. 43, No. 346, April, 1982. Published monthly by DC COMICS INC., 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10019. Second Class Postage paid at New York, N.Y. and Additional Mailing Offices. Copyright © 1982 by DC Comics Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. No actual persons, living or dead, are intended or should be inferred. Printed in U.S.A.

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SUBSCRIPTION DEPT.: DC COMICS INC., P.O. Box 1308-F, Fort Lee, N.J. 07024. Annual subscription rate $7.20. Outside U.S.A. $8.20.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to DC COMICS INC., P.O. Box 1308-F, Fort Lee, N.J. 07024.

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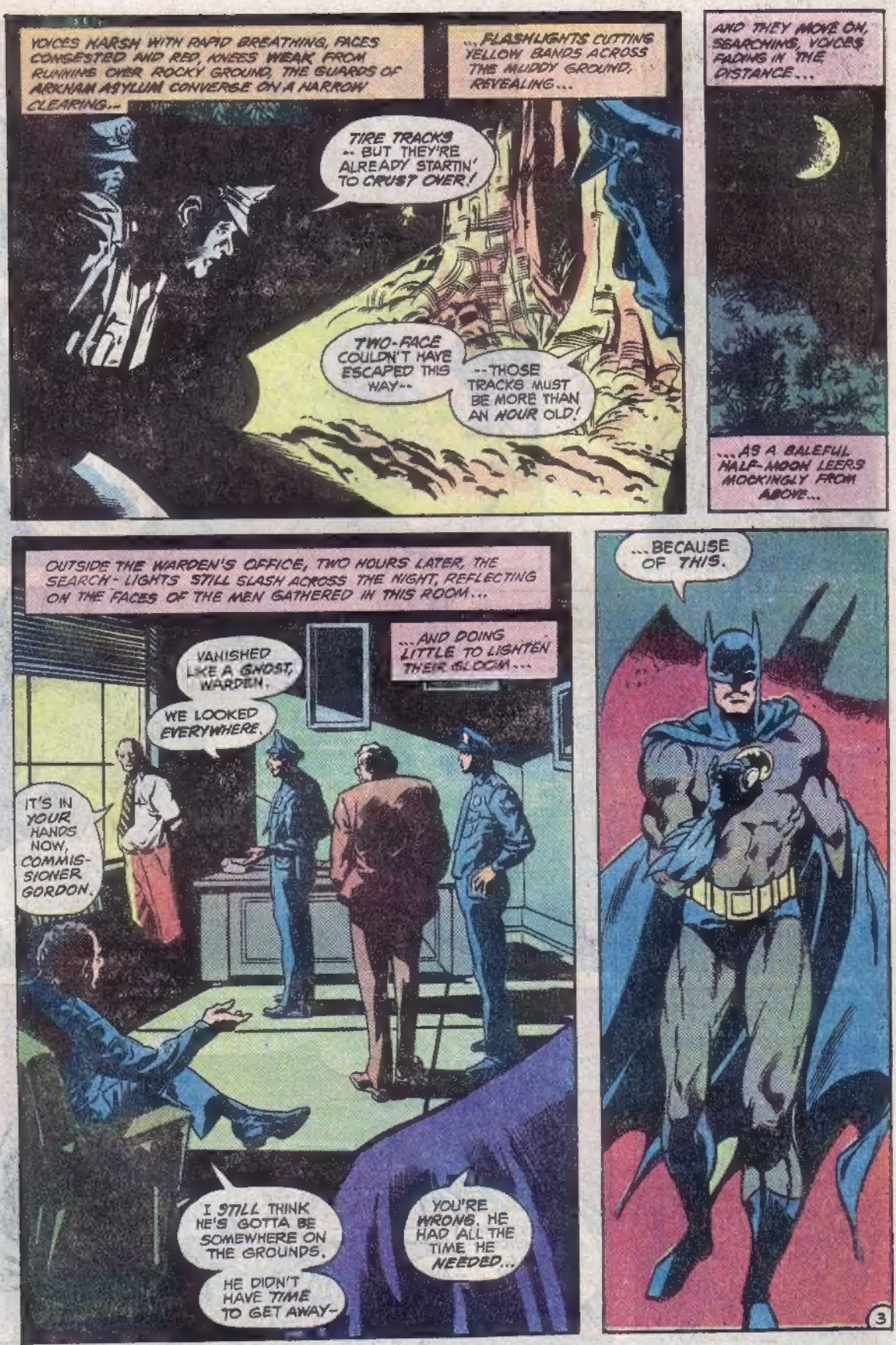
NOTHING TO SAY, TWO-FACE?
YOU'RE AS COOL AS A BLOCK'A ICE!
SITTIN' THERE TOSSING THAT MARKED-UP SILVER DOLLAR--
--THAT SILVER DOLLAR--
TAK
HEY, HE DROPPED IT. WHY WOULD--
SAINTED MOTHER!
HE'S GONE!
WE DIDN'T TAKE OUR EYES OFF HIM FOR A SECOND--
--AND SOMEHOW, HE DISAPPEARED!
GOTTA HIT THE ALARM--
BREEEBREEEE
CLATTER
BREEEBREEEEBREEEBREEEEEE
2


VOICES HARSH WITH RAPID BREATHING, FACES CONGESTED AND RED, KNEES WEAK FROM RUNNING OVER ROCKY GROUND, THE GUARDS OF ARKHAM ASYLUM CONVERSE ON A NARROW CLEARING...
...FLASHLIGHTS CUTTING YELLOW BANDS ACROSS THE MUDDY GROUND, REVEALING...
TIRE TRACKS -- BUT THEY'RE ALREADY STARTIN' TO CRUST OVER!
TWO-FACE COULDN'T HAVE ESCAPED THIS WAY--
--THOSE TRACKS MUST BE MORE THAN AN HOUR OLD!
AND THEY MOVE ON, SEARCHING, VOICES FADING IN THE DISTANCE...
...AS A BALEFUL HALF-MOON LEERS MOCKINGLY FROM ABOVE...
OUTSIDE THE WARDEN'S OFFICE, TWO HOURS LATER, THE SEARCH-LIGHTS STILL SLASH ACROSS THE NIGHT, REFLECTING ON THE FACES OF THE MEN GATHERED IN THIS ROOM...
...AND DOING LITTLE TO LIGHTEN THEIR GLOOM...
VANISHED LIKE A GHOST, WARDEN.
WE LOOKED EVERYWHERE.
IT'S IN YOUR HANDS NOW, COMMISSIONER GORDON.
I STILL THINK HE'S GOTTA BE SOMEWHERE ON THE GROUNDS.
HE DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO GET AWAY-
YOU'RE WRONG. HE HAD ALL THE TIME HE NEEDED...
...BECAUSE OF THIS.
3

WHEN THE BATMAN SPEAKS, THOSE WHO KNOW HIS REPUTATION LISTEN; THE ROOM FALLS SILENT, AS...
I FOUND IT IN TWO-FACE'S CELL.
IT LOOKS LIKE HIS HALF-SCARRED SILVER DOLLAR--
--BUT AS YOU CAN SEE--
"--IT'S NOT!"
GREAT SCOTT-- THEY'RE HYPNOTIZED!
THAT'S HOW TWO-FACE SEEMED TO VANISH-- HE SLIPPED OUT OF HIS CELL, LEAVING THESE TWO MEN IN A TRANCE!
THEY THOUGHT ONLY SECONDS HAD PASSED-- WHEN, IN FACT, DENT MUST HAVE BEEN GONE FOR AN HOUR OR MORE!
EVEN AFTER ALL THESE YEARS-- IT'S HARD FOR ME TO BELIEVE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT HARVEY DENT, ONE TIME DISTRICT ATTORNEY!
HOW DOES SUCH A GOOD MAN-- BECOME SUCH A MONSTER?
YOU KNOW THE WHOLE SAD STORY AS WELL AS WE DO, WARDEN.
DENT WAS HORRIBLY SCARRED -- IT RUINED HIS MIND -- TURNED HIM TO CRIME--
--AND HE FLIPS A COIN TO DECIDE WHETHER TO BREAK THE LAW -- OR UPHOLD IT.
THERE'S NOTHING MORE WE CAN DO HERE, COMMISSIONER. CAN I GIVE YOU A RIDE BACK TO THE CITY?
GORDON'S REPLY IS A SIGH AND A NOD.
SOON AFTER, SOUTHBOUND ON THE GOTHAM BRIDGE...
OUT WITH IT, JIM. BACK IN WARDEN'S CLARK'S OFFICE, YOU LOOKED LIKE A LONG-DISTANCE RUNNER NEAR THE END OF HIS WIND...
SOMETHING'S BOTHERING YOU, IS IT OUR NEW MAYOR, HAMILTON HILL?
HE WANTS MY RESIGNATION-- TO FULFILL A CAMPAIGN PROMISE--
--AND TO BE HONEST, BATMAN--
4

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

--THE WAY I FEEL NOW, HE'S WELCOME TO IT.
LORD, I'M SO VERY TIRED.

THEY SAY LITTLE MORE TO EACH OTHER DURING THE REST OF THE DRIVE TO GORDON'S WEST-SIDE APARTMENT.
THE YEARS THEY'VE SPENT TOGETHER HAVE GIVEN EACH AN INSTINCTIVE UNDERSTANDING OF THE OTHER.

...BARBARA.
DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE YOU HERE TONIGHT.
I LET MYSELF IN, DAD-- I HAVEN'T SEEN MUCH OF YOU LATELY--
--AND KNOWING HOW LITTLE CARE YOU TAKE OF YOURSELF, SINCE MOM DIED, I THOUGHT YOU COULD USE A HOME-COOKED MEAL.

ODD, YOU MENTIONING YOUR MOTHER.
IT SEEMS I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT HER QUITE A BIT THESE PAST FEW WEEKS...
YOU LOOK EXHAUSTED.
GO STRETCH OUT ON THE SOFA--
I'LL CALL YOU WHEN DINNER'S READY.

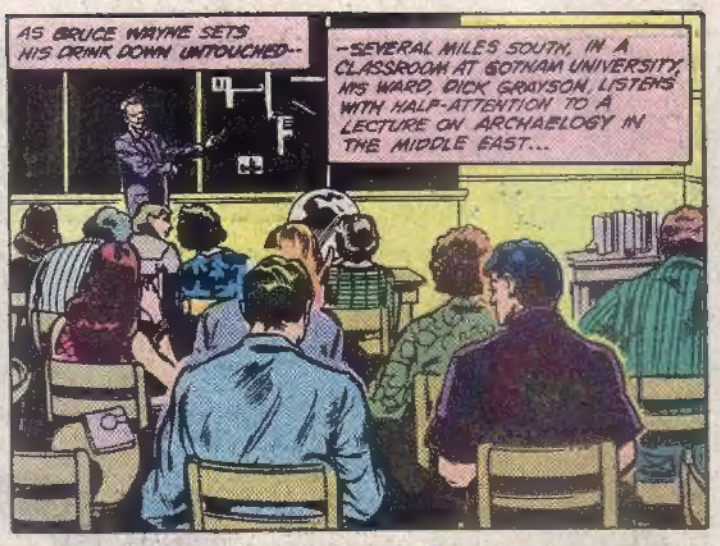
LIKE A MAN UNDERWATER, STRUGGLING FOR BREATH, JAMES GORDON GIVES A JERKING SHAKE OF HIS HEAD, WANDERING AWAY FROM A WORRIED BARBARA GORDON...
HE'S CHANGED. IT'S AS IF SOMETHING WERE BROKEN INSIDE HIM.
AND I KNOW WHAT IT IS-- HIS HEART.

THE WAYNE BUILDING, NOT MANY MILES AWAY...

...WHERE A HIDDEN ELEVATOR MOVES SILENTLY UPWARD TO A SECRET EXIT IN THE FIREPLACE OF BRUCE WAYNE'S PENTHOUSE...

BUT, WHEN IT SLOWS SILENTLY TO A STOP, AND THE CONCEALED EXIT THROUGH THE PENTHOUSE FIREPLACE CLICKS QUIETLY OPEN--
A MOMENT, SIR. YOU HAVE A VISITOR.
BRUCE WAYNE DRAWS BACK WITH ALFRED'S WARNING...
...AND WAITS IN DARKNESS, STIFF WITH TENSION...
...UNTIL LIGHT FLOODS IN AROUND HIM...
IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW, SIR.
I MOVED HIM INTO YOUR DEN.
MOVED WHOM--?
LUCIUS FOX, SIR. HE'S HERE ON WAYNE FOUNDATION BUSINESS...
DID HE NOTICE ANYTHING?
NO, SIR.
I THINK NOT.
BLAST! THIS IS JUST THE SORT OF THING I WANTED TO AVOID BY GIVING UP AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE FOUNDATION'S AFFAIRS.
BRUCE WAYNE'S LIFE WAS ALWAYS INTERFERING WITH MY WORK AS THE BATMAN--AND IT HAS TO STOP, HERE AND NOW.
AH, BRUCE --GLAD I CAUGHT YOU IN.
SOMETHING'S COME UP THAT I'D LIKE YOUR OPINION ON--
--THIS BOND ISSUE BY GOTHAM FEDERAL BANK...
LUCIUS, I'M DISAPPOINTED IN YOU.
WHEN I RECOMMENDED YOU TO THE FOUNDATION BOARD AS PRESIDENT--
--I THOUGHT YOU WERE A TAKE-CHARGE TYPE.
NOW YOU HAVE A PROBLEM--
--AND THE FIRST THING YOU DO IS COME WHINING TO ME.
IF YOU CAN'T HANDLE THE JOB, WE CAN FIND SOMEONE ELSE...
STARTLED AND HURT, LUCIUS FOX STARES AT THE MAN HE'S CALLED FRIEND THESE PAST THREE YEARS...

A MOMENT LATER, THE DOOR SWINGS SOFTLY SHUT BEHIND HIM...
LUCIUS, LUCIUS -- I'M SORRY.
THERE MUST BE A BETTER WAY...


AS BRUCE WAYNE SETS HIS DRINK DOWN UNTOUCHED--
--SEVERAL MILES SOUTH, IN A CLASSROOM AT GOTHAM UNIVERSITY, HIS WARD, DICK GRAYSON, LISTENS WITH HALF-ATTENTION TO A LECTURE ON ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE MIDDLE EAST...

... WHILE HIS EYES REMAIN RIVETED ON A WOMAN SITTING A FEW DESKS AWAY...
HER NAME IS DALA. HE THOUGHT THEY WERE... FRIENDS.

I DON'T GET IT. SHE SAT THROUGH THE ENTIRE CLASS WITHOUT EVEN GLANCING AT ME!
WHAT GIVES? IS IT SOMETHING I DID--?
DALA, WAIT UP!

REMEMBER ME-- WE'VE BEEN SEEING A LOT OF EACH OTHER LATELY.
RICHARD.
I SO HOPED YOU WOULDN'T MAKE A SCENE.
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? AFTER THE LAST FEW NIGHTS, I THOUGHT WE HAD SOMETHING SPECIAL--

DEAR RICHARD.
BE A GOOD BOY-- GO HOME. IT'S OVER, DON'T YOU SEE?

NO, LADY, I DON'T SEE.
7

SOMETHING DOESN'T FIT.
EITHER YOU WERE USING ME-- OR YOU'RE IN SOME KIND OF TROUBLE.
DIDN'T GET A LOOK AT YOUR FRIEND IN THE CAR--
--BUT I'VE GOT HIS LICENSE, AND I'M NOT LETTING THIS DROP TILL I FIND OUT WHAT'S WRONG--!
DEAR BOY... YOU'RE REACTING EXACTLY AS WE PLANNED...!

GOTHAM CITY AT NIGHT IS LIKE A TOY STORE FOR ADULTS.
STORE WINDOWS GLITTER, NEON SIGNS SPARKLE, THE CITY HUMS WITH THE CHARMING EFFICIENCY OF A MODEL TRAIN.
PARIS WAS NOTHING LIKE THIS, BRUCE...

THEY SAY IT'S THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CITY IN THE WORLD-- AND MAYBE THAT'S TRUE.
BUT GOTHAM IS THE MOST VITAL -- THE MOST ALIVE.
IT'S PHOTOGRAPHER HEAVEN.

WHY DID YOU STAY AWAY FOR SO LONG, THEN, VICKI?
LOTS OF GOOD REASONS-- MY CAREER WAS TAKING OFF, FOR ONE.
I WAS PICTURE NEWS MAGAZINE'S PARIS BUREAU CHIEF.
GOOD REASON-- BUT NOT THE REAL REASON...

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

WHEW.
THE OLD FIRES HEATING UP, AREN'T THEY?
IT'S CORNY, I KNOW, BUT WHEN YOU HOLD ME I FEEL LIKE I'M HALFWAY TO HEAVEN...
"HALFWAY"...?
GREAT SCOTT!
HEY!
WHAT DID I SAY?
TAXI!
VICKI, FORGIVE ME, BUT I JUST REMEMBERED--
--I HAVE AN IMPORTANT DATE WITH MY SHIRT-MAKER TONIGHT.
HE'S GOTTEN IN A SHIPMENT OF MOROCCAN SILK, AND--
YOUR SHIRT-MAKER? BRUCE, OF ALL THE--
CAN'T TALK-- GOTTA RUSH--
I'LL CALL YOU TOMORROW.
SHIRT-MAKER, MY TUSH! THIS CLINCHES IT.
BRUCE HAS A DATE, ALL RIGHT--AS THE BATMAN!
GOTHAM'S LOWER EAST SIDE, NOT MANY MINUTES LATER...
VICKI REMINDED ME, UNWITTINGLY, THAT TWO-FACE HAD APPLIED FOR PAROLE TO A HALFWAY HOUSE HERE IN GOTHAM CITY--
--THIS HALFWAY HOUSE, ON EAST 4TH STREET.
GOTHAM DEPT. OF CORRECTION HALFWAY HOUSE
TWO-FACE IS AS INTERESTED IN REHABILITATION AS I AM IN HOG FUTURES-- SO WHY DID HE APPLY FOR THE EARLY PAROLE PROGRAM?
9

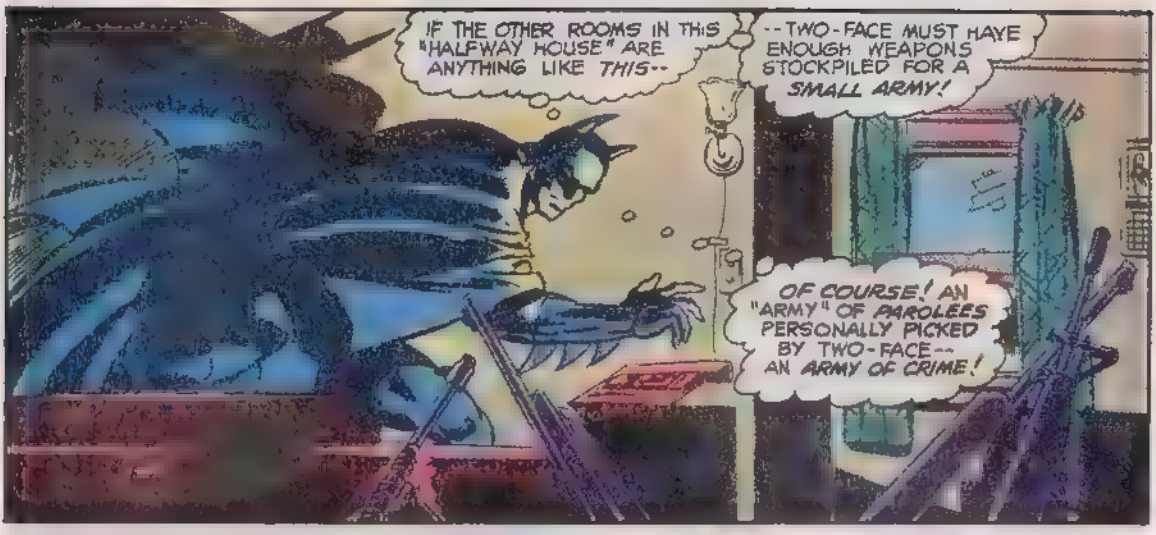
I'M BETTING I'LL FIND AN ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION--
--SOMEWHERE INSIDE THAT HALFWAY HOUSE!
HE MAKES NO MORE SOUND THAN A PASSING SHADOW AS HE SLIPS ACROSS THE DARKENED PAVEMENT, AVOIDING THE STREETLAMP'S GLOW--
--AND STEPPING LIGHTLY PAST A SNORING DERELICT SPRAWLED ACROSS THE BUILDING'S CRACKED STONE ENTRANCE.
HE BELIEVES HE ENTERS THE HALFWAY HOUSE UNOBSERVED.
WHOOM.
HE JUST WENT IN.
YOU WANT I SHOULD FOLLOW 'IM?
NO, COSMO, MAINTAIN YOUR POSITION--
--WE'LL LET OUR TWIN ATTACK TEAMS HANDLE THE BATMAN.
IT'S ABOUT TIME THEY PUT THEIR MONTHS OF TRAINING TO SOME USE.
DO YOU THINK HE SUSPECTS WHAT WE'VE DONE, DARLING?
THEY SAY HE'S A BRILLIANT DETECTIVE...
EVEN HE HAS HIS LIMITS, MARGO.
WITHOUT INFORMATION-- HE HAS NO CLUES -- AND WITHOUT CLUES, HOW CAN HE MAKE A DEDUCTION?

WE'VE BEEN SO VERY CAREFUL-- KEEPING OUR RELATIONSHIP SECRET ALL THESE MONTHS SINCE WE MET IN THE PRISON LIBRARY--
--WORKING TOGETHER, YOU ON THE OUTSIDE, I ON THE INSIDE, TO BRING OUR DREAM TO LIFE!
I ONLY HOPE THE DREAM DOESN'T TURN INTO A NIGHTMARE!
THE BATMAN FRIGHTENS ME, MY LOVE! PLEASE-- DESTROY HIM.
WE'LL LET THE COIN DECIDE.
SCARRED SIDE UP.
IT'S SETTLED, THEN--
THE BATMAN WILL NEVER LEAVE THIS BUILDING ALIVE!
AS HE STEPS ACROSS THE THRESHOLD, A LIGHT COMES ON ABOVE, AND FOR A MOMENT, HE IS TOTALLY DISORIENTED...
LOBBY
ONE HALF OF THE LOBBY IS A RAGGED SHAMBLES -- THE OTHER, AS GLITTERING AND GOLDEN AS THE PLAZA.
SMALL MUSCLES TENSE AT THE BACK OF HIS NECK.
OBVIOUSLY -- THIS IS A TRAP.

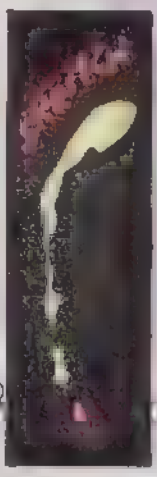
HE BRACES HIMSELF, ADRENALINE PUMPING FROM KIDNEYS TO HEART--
--SENDING A SURGE OF ENERGY LIKE WHITE FIRE THROUGH HIS ARTERIES--
--PREPARING HIM FOR DEADLY COMBAT.
AND WHEN THE MOMENT COMES--
--HE IS READY.
SQUASH 'IM!
AN INTRIGUING NOTION, OLD MAN, BUT SADLY NOT FEASABLE!
I'M AFRAID WE'LL HAVE TO SETTLE FOR A MORE TRADITIONAL METHOD OF DISPOSAL!
POW!
JUST MAKE 'IM DEAD!
THAT'S THE PLAN, AND THAT'S WHAT WE'LL DO--
PROVIDED YOU OAFS CAN KEEP OUT OF OUR WAY!
KRAK
KAAH!
SOR-RY!
LUNACY--

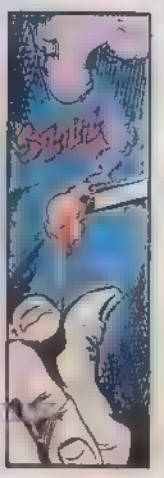
--TWO-FACE HAS TURNED THIS HALFWAY HOUSE INTO A MAD-HOUSE!
HE HAS TWO SETS OF HENCHMEN--ONE, A GROUP OF GENTEEL GUNMEN--
--THE OTHER, A GANG OF CRUDE THUGS!
I'VE NO TIME TO WASTE FIGHTING THUGS OF EITHER STRIPE.
TWO-FACE IS HERE, SOMEWHERE--
--AND I'M GOING TO FIND HIM, EVEN IF I HAVE TO HUNT HIM DOWN IN THE DARK!"
KRASH!
POW!
KRONK!
FROM THE SOUNDS OF THINGS, THOSE THUGS ARE STILL FIGHTING IT OUT DOWNSTAIRS IN THE LOBBY--
--WHILE I MAKE A DASH FOR THE UPPER STORIES!
WITH LUCK, I WON'T BE MISSED UNTIL--EH?
TWO-FACE IS CARRYING HIS SPLIT-ROOM MOTIFF TO EXTREMES!
WAIT--THOSE MARKS ON THE CARPET UP AHEAD--LIKE A SEAM RUNNING FROM ONE SIDE OF THE CORRIDOR TO THE OTHER--!
NOT A SEAM--THE CARPET'S BEEN CUT!
THAT CAN ONLY MEAN--
SWISSSH!
LORD!

HIS REACTION IS INSTINCTIVE.
HE CAN'T GO BACK
THE ONLY WAY OUT-- IS FORWARD.
KHOOM
CUTE-- CRUDE, BUT CUTE A GUILLOTINE DISGUISED AS A WALL.
SO THIS MADHOUSE IS ALSO A DEATH-
I THINK I'LL AVOID THE STAIRS.
I CAN REACH THE UPPER STORIES JUST AS EASILY BY THIS FIRE ESCAPE...
...
THAT BIRD ON THE GRATING OUTSIDE THE WINDOW-- BURNED.
I WONDER...
ZZZ


IF THE OTHER ROOMS IN THIS "HALFWAY HOUSE" ARE ANYTHING LIKE THIS--
--TWO-FACE MUST HAVE ENOUGH WEAPONS STOCKPILED FOR A SMALL ARMY!
OF COURSE! AN "ARMY" OF PAROLEES PERSONALLY PICKED BY TWO-FACE-- AN ARMY OF CRIME!

THIS HAS TO BE STOPPED.
YOU'RE SOMEWHERE UP THERE, TWO-FACE. I CAN FEEL IT.
I'M COMING FOR YOU NOW.



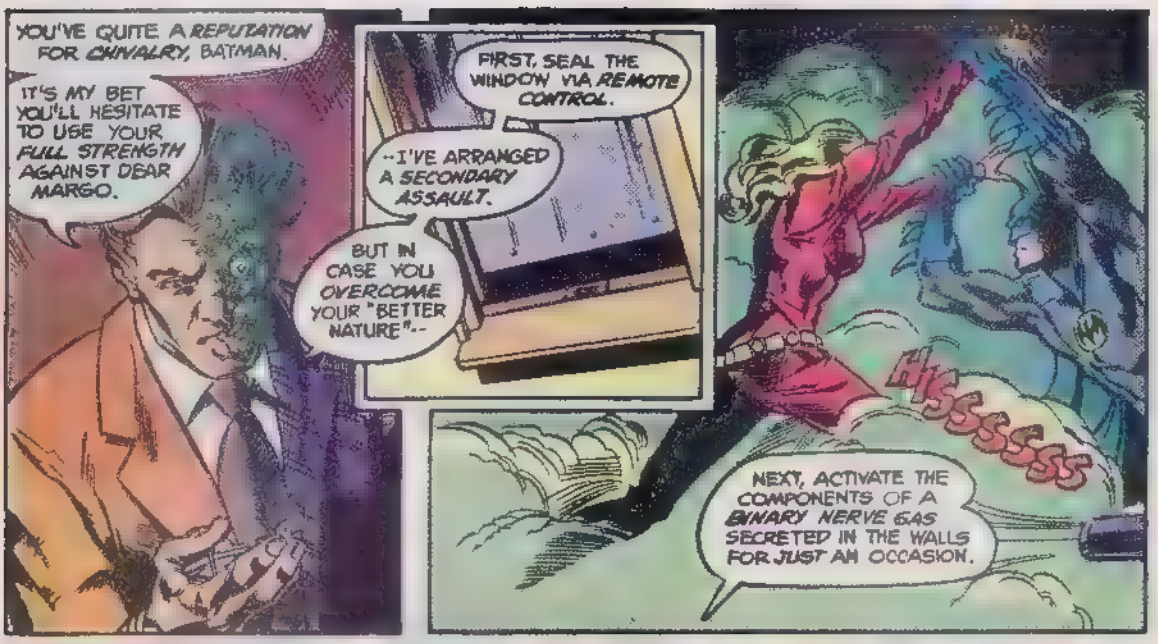


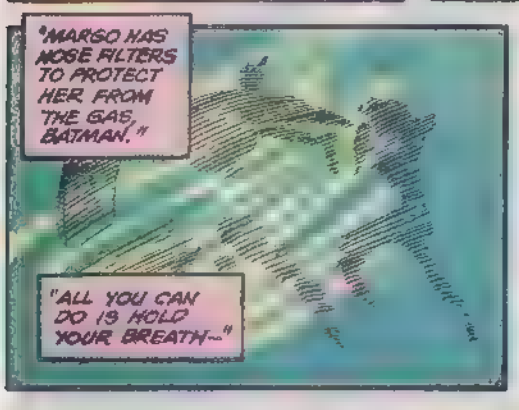
HE'S HERE.
I CAN FEEL IT.

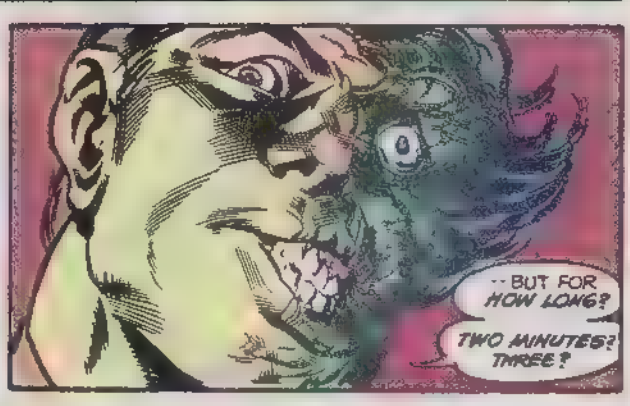
I'M NOT SURPRISED.
NO SUDDEN MOVES, HARVEY.
SNEAKING IN WINDOWS, BATMAN?
THAT'S NOT YOUR STYLE.

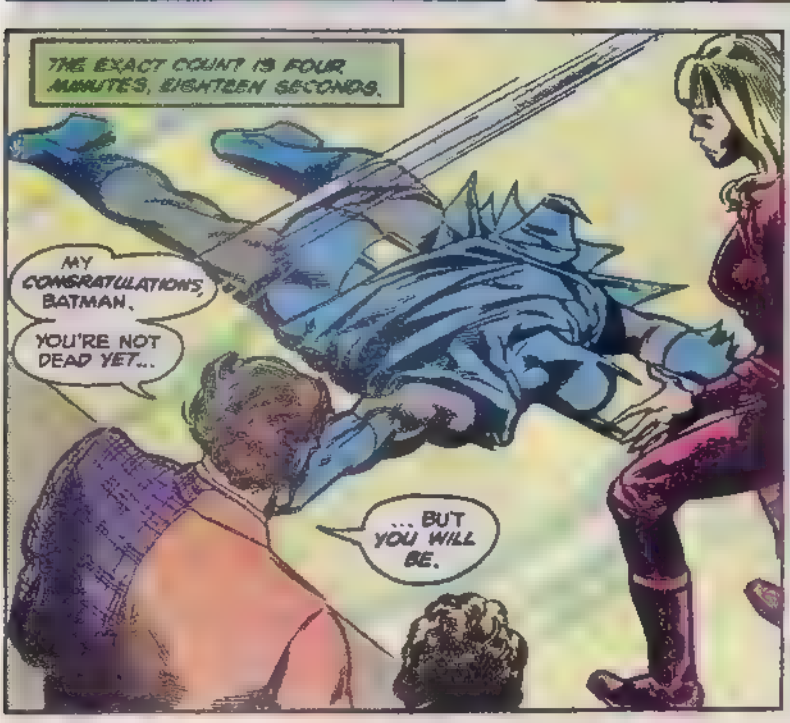
MIND IF I TURN ON A LIGHT?
I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU BETTER..
--BEFORE YOU DIE.

BLUSTERING THREATS AREN'T YOUR STYLE, HARVEY.
GIVE IT UP.
WHATEVER YOUR PLANS WERE FOR THIS HOUSE, THEY'RE FINISHED.
ARE THEY REALLY?
YES... REALLY.
CLICK
CLICK
HANDCUFFS, YET. HOW DROLL.
YOU MAY THINK YOU'VE WRITTEN FINI TO THIS ADVENTURE, BATMAN, BUT DON'T FORGET--
A MASK--?
--THERE ARE TWO SIDES TO EVERY STORY!
LIGHTS FLASH ON, OVERHEAD, AND WHAT WAS HIDDEN IN SHADOW NOW STANDS REVEALED...
ANOTHER TWO-SIDED ROOM—CUT IN HALF BY A GLASS WALL--
--WITH TWO-FACE AND HIS HENCHMEN ON THE OTHER SIDE!
I TOLD HIM I WAS AFRAID OF YOU, BATMAN.
HE'S GIVEN ME THIS CHANCE TO EXORCISE MY FEARS--
--ONCE AND FOR ALL!
16


YOU'VE QUITE A REPUTATION FOR CHIVALRY, BATMAN.
IT'S MY BET YOU'LL HESITATE TO USE YOUR FULL STRENGTH AGAINST DEAR MARGO.
BUT IN CASE YOU OVERCOME YOUR "BETTER NATURE"--
--I'VE ARRANGED A SECONDARY ASSAULT.
FIRST, SEAL THE WINDOW VIA REMOTE CONTROL.
HISSSSSS
NEXT, ACTIVATE THE COMPONENTS OF A BINARY NERVE GAS SECRETED IN THE WALLS FOR JUST AN OCCASION.

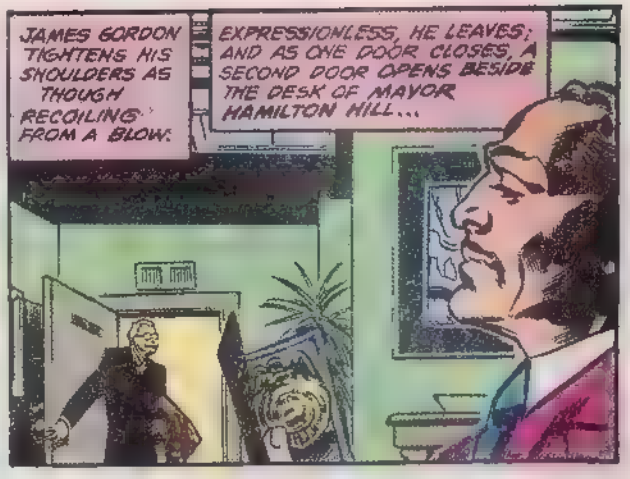




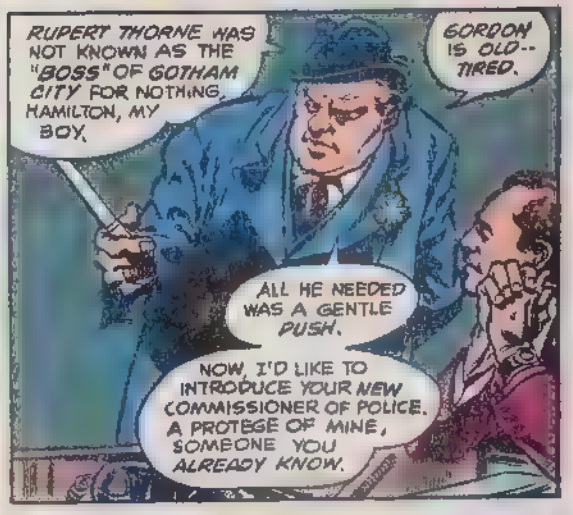


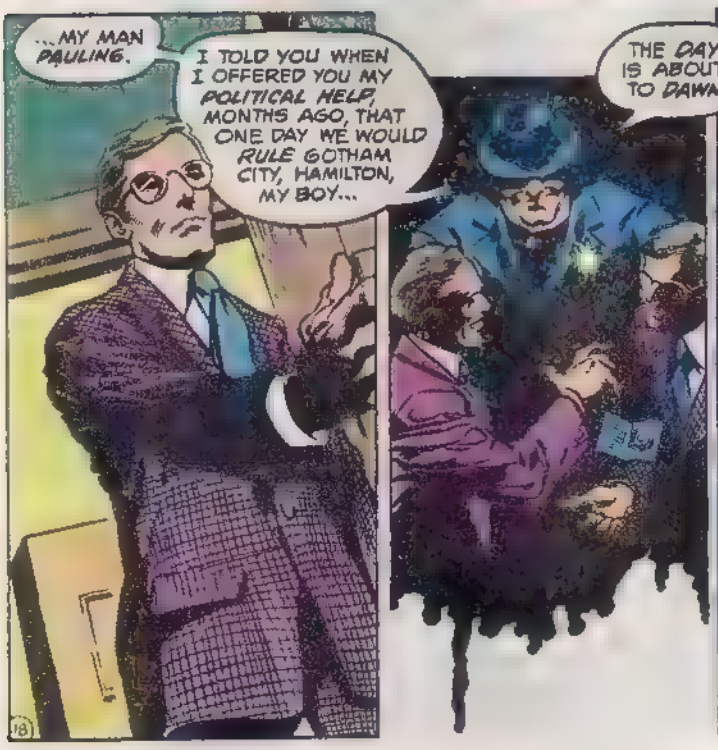
CONCLUDED ON 3rd PAGE FOLLOWING

--BUT BEFORE I GO, TELL ME WHY.
WHY FORCE MY RESIGNATION--NOW THAT YOU'VE WON THE CAMPAIGN?
I'M MAYOR, GORDON.
AS FAR AS YOU'RE CONCERNED, THAT'S REASON ENOUGH.


JAMES GORDON TIGHTENS HIS SHOULDERS AS THOUGH RECOILING FROM A BLOW.
EXPRESSIONLESS, HE LEAVES; AND AS ONE DOOR CLOSES, A SECOND DOOR OPENS BESIDE THE DESK OF MAYOR HAMILTON HILL...

SO MUCH FOR COMMISSIONER GORDON.
IT WENT JUST AS YOU SAID IT WOULD.
HE DIDN'T EVEN PUT UP A FIGHT.


RUPERT THORNE WAS NOT KNOWN AS THE "BOSS" OF GOTHAM CITY FOR NOTHING, HAMILTON, MY BOY.
GORDON IS OLD--TIRED.
ALL HE NEEDED WAS A GENTLE PUSH.
NOW, I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOUR NEW COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, A PROTEGE OF MINE, SOMEONE YOU ALREADY KNOW.


...MY MAN PAULING.
I TOLD YOU WHEN I OFFERED YOU MY POLITICAL HELP, MONTHS AGO, THAT ONE DAY WE WOULD RULE GOTHAM CITY, HAMILTON, MY BOY...
THE DAY IS ABOUT TO DAWN.
TO BE CONTINUED...
...IN THE PAGES OF DETECTIVE 513: "THE TWO-FACE BATMAN"

Dear Dick

Just a word of praise for your "Just A Moment" mysteries. My father, Manfred Lee, and his cousin, Frederic Dannay, wrote the Ellery Queen mysteries. I've read 'em since I was a kid. And though most of the time they played fair and gave their readers all the clues, I could *never* figure out whodunit. Ditto your deadly "Moments." It looks as though detecting just ain't *my* game!

Rand Lee, 3 Higgs Lane, Key West, FL 33040

Keep trying, Rand. We're having a bit of fun with this little series. We're playing soft and hard with the mysteries and experimenting. Some will be hard; others will be simple. And we'll try to stay out of a rut. Which explains why the feature will be an infrequent visitor to these pages.

* * * * *

Dear Editor,

About the cover to BATMAN 341. Terrific! Jim Aparo is a great cover artist.

Jefferson Wolfe, 1706 Walnut St, Fostoria, OH

Does pretty good pages, too!

* * * * *

Dear Mr. Bat Man,

You are my favorite hero. Even though you are unable to do all the things you do in cartoons and comics I still like you. And I just love your television show. Nice talking to you. Goodbye for now.

Your friend, Christopher Conroy (age 8) Watervliet, NY 12189

Thanks so much, Christopher. I really enjoyed seeing your drawings of me.

All my best, Batman

* * * * *

Dear Dick,

Gene Colan's work shows that he very definitely has still "got it" and I'm looking forward to his impending regular stint on The Batman. But this issue (#341) reminds me how much I appreciate the work of Irv Novick. The Common Wisdom has it that Irv will be the one displaced by Gene, ie., that Don Newton at Detective and Jim Aparo at Brave & Bold are solidly entrenched. But Irv is himself a solid artist and I hope you'll use your powers and influence to have him assigned to a major series somewhere.

In regards to your question about Agincourt in the lettercol (and since I'm a regular fount of geographical information): Agincourt is a small "town" in the exurbia of Metropolitan Toronto. According to my atlas, it's the only place in the world with that name, which is strange since we've all heard of the famous Battle of Agincourt. (It took place on October 25, 1415 and in it a British army of about 5,000 suffered only about 100 dead in defeating a French army of 20,000-25,000 which lost 7,000-10,000 killed.) According to a map of the battle, Agincourt was just off the Ternoise River about 30 miles from the coast in the Artois region of France. It was about 10 miles north-west of the present-day town of St. Pol.

Yours truly, TM Maple

Maple, you really are Mad, but we love you. Thanks for the info; we do appreciate it.

Of course, you know by now that the art assignments are exactly as you guessed they would be. I'd like to point out that replacing Irv Novick with Gene Colan was not intended to be a criticism of Irv's effort. We stand behind no one in the admiration of Irv's considerable talents! Irv Novick fans can take heart! He is currently the regular artist on DC COMICS PRESENTS.

* * * * *

Dear Dick,

BATMAN #341 was stupendous! Over the past couple of months Batman has become my favorite super-hero. He is vastly different from your run of the mill super-hero. For one thing, he has humility. He isn't as showy as other heroes. He keeps to himself and his personal life is his last consideration when there is a criminal to be brought to justice. This is a true hero.

The cover illustration on BATMAN #341 captured the true spirit of the Batman. I like the mystery theme in BATMAN more than any other theme. I think it suits the character of Batman better than any other.

"The Ghost Of Wayne Mansion" was flawless in both art and written content. As for the matter of the mayoral election in Gotham City, I think that whoever is in office now will be re-elected. If, however, he (or she) is not re-elected, I believe that Councilman Reeves will be elected since I suspect Reeves of being the pawn of the mysterious man recently released from Arkham Asylum.

"Murder Will Out" was great! The art was excellent! I would like to see more "Just A Moment" mysteries in the future (preferably every issue).

"Night Of The Coven" made BATMAN #341 a perfect comic. I would like to see the back up feature with Robin continue.

Michael E. Iacca, 16 Walnut Ter., Bloomfield, N.J. 07003

* * * * *

I suspect that by now you're aware that the election is over and Gotham has a new mayor. (I don't think we ever said who the old one was, did we?) The importance of this election will become very apparent over the next couple of issues. Hang in there and keep watching for new developments. The best is yet to come!

* * * * *

Editor,

The highlights of "Batman" #341 were the 'Just A Moment Mystery' and the ROBIN tale. I hope we'll see more of these 'Just A Moment Mystery' mini-features. (Never mind about whether I figured this one out or not.). They make excellent fillers. Trevor Von Eeden & Mike DeCarlo did a nice job of illustrating ROBIN THE TEEN WONDER. Conway also fared better in this back-up story. Young heroes like ROBIN usually work out pretty well against evil cults. This type of situation can offer ROBIN a great chance to display some of the fighting and thinking skills he has learned at the hands of the master, THE BATMAN. It is time that we were seeing ROBIN as the super-skilled crime-fighter he has been groomed to be all of his life. This more capable treatment would also help ROBIN maintain credibility in the face of super-powered stars such as THE TEEN TITANS.

Wallace Lee Hopkins, Box 428, Glen Carbon, IL 62034

We think you'll approve of the direction ROBIN is moving in. We are aware of his role in the New Teen Titans and often converse with Titans scripter Marv Wolfman. Keep watching.

* * * * *

From all indications, 1982 looks like it's going to be a very Happy New Year! And you'll be there with us, right? Thank you and good afternoon. – Dick Giordano

THE TRAINS WERE DISAPPEARING ONE BY ONE, FIRST THE AMTRAK 417, THEN THE 418. ENGINE, CARS, CABOOSE. THE ENTIRE TRAIN, JUST VANISHED INTO THIN AIR SOMEWHERE BETWEEN GOTHAM AND CHICAGO. THE POLICE WERE STYMIED. THE FBI WAS IN A TAILSPIN. THE PUBLIC WAS PANICKED. EVEN THOUGH BOTH TRAINS AND PASSENGERS HAD EVENTUALLY SHOWN UP AT THEIR CHICAGO DESTINATION INTACT, UNHARMED. NOTHING HAD BEEN STOLEN, NOTHING HAD BEEN SMUGGLED INTO THE WINDY CITY.

BUT PASSENGERS HAD CLAIMED TO HAVE SEEN "GHOSTS" ABOARD BOTH TRAINS, AND MANY HAD COMPLAINED OF LOSS OF MEMORY. WHAT WAS HAPPENING? WAS THE RAILWAY REALLY "HAUNTED"? CATWOMAN DIDN'T THINK SO. SHE HAD VOLUNTEERED TO RIDE THE 419 AND HELP GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS. BUT SHE GOT TO THE BOTTOM OF SOMETHING FAR DEEPER...

In the Land of the DEAD!

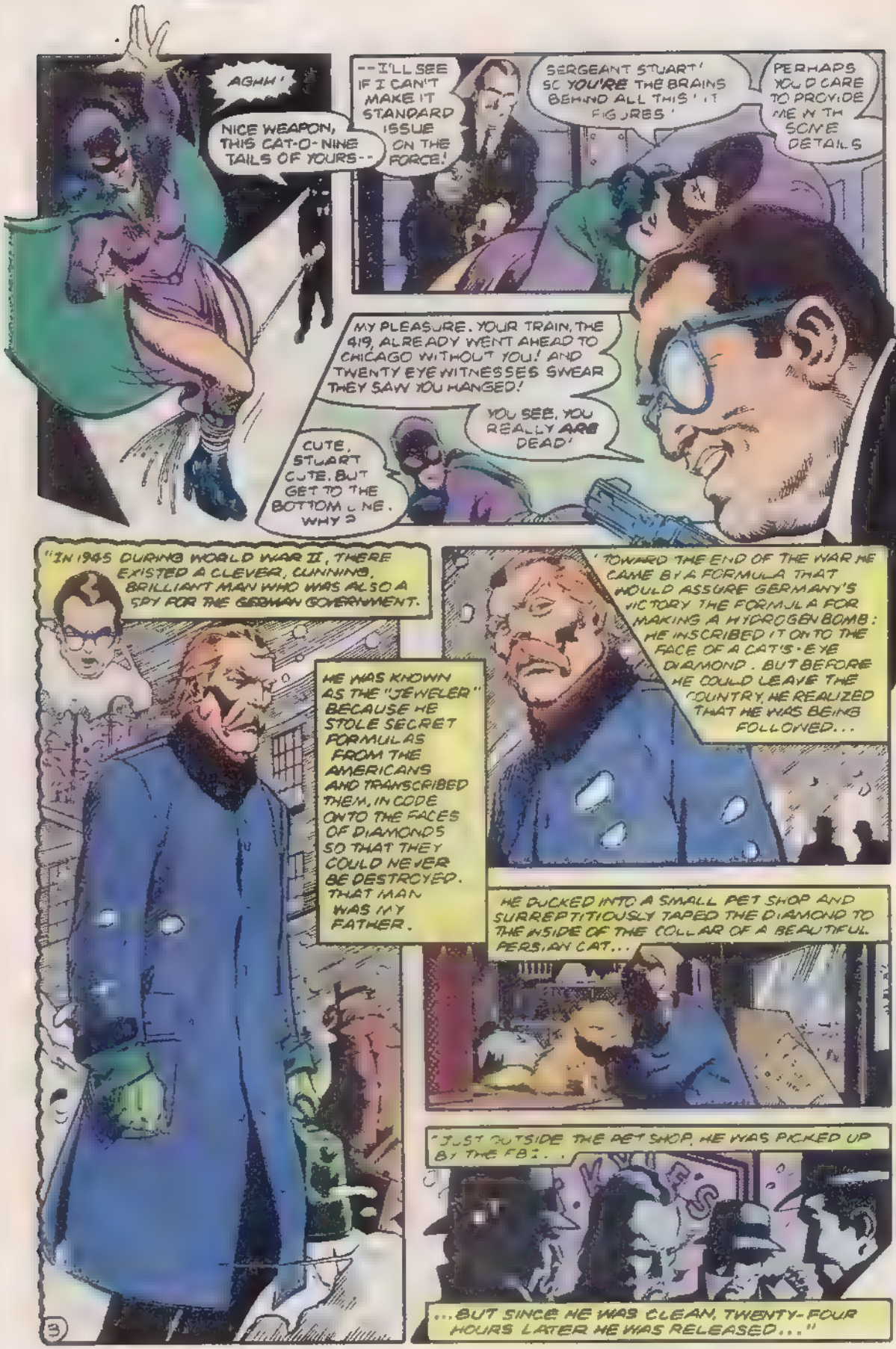
THE CATWOMAN

UH...BLACKED OUT... HEAD SPLITTING... W-WHAT HAPPENED? L-LAST TH NG I RE-MEMBER, I WAS BEING HANGED BY A GHOST!

BY
ART
TREVOR VON EEDEN & PABLO MARCOS
LETTERING
SHELLY
COLORIST
TOM ZIUKO
EDITOR
DICK GIORDANO

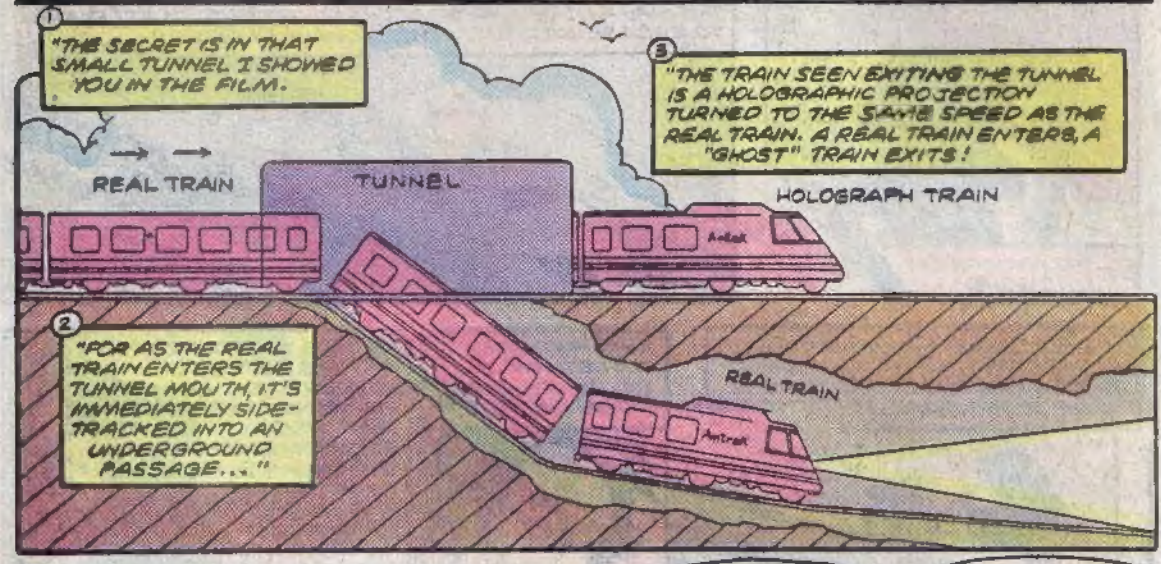
AN UNDERGROUND TRAIN YARD! THAT'S THE 420! SO THE OTHER TRAINS WERE HIJACKED!
BUT WHY? AND BY WHOM?
ONE WAY TO FIND OUT!
WHOK
UH!
GET HER, LYLE! GET HE--AGGH!
NICE CATCH, LYLE!
UUUUMPH!
LET'S SURROUND HER, PETE..
S'MATTER, LYLE? LOSE YOUR GUN?
SHUFF!
REALLY, BOYS, YOU'RE MAKING THIS FAR TOO EASY!
PERHAPS I CAN EVEN THE ODDS A BIT!
NH...?
2

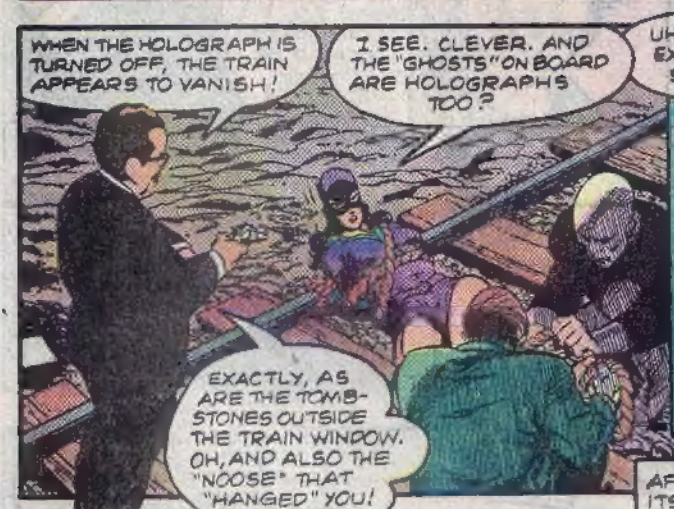
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING


AGHH!
NICE WEAPON, THIS CAT-O-NINE TAILS OF YOURS--
--I'LL SEE IF I CAN'T MAKE IT STANDARD ISSUE ON THE FORCE!
SERGEANT STUART! SO YOU'RE THE BRAINS BEHIND ALL THIS!..IT FIGURES!
PERHAPS YOU'D CARE TO PROVIDE ME WITH SOME DETAILS
MY PLEASURE. YOUR TRAIN, THE 4:19, ALREADY WENT AHEAD TO CHICAGO WITHOUT YOU! AND TWENTY EYEWITNESSES SWEAR THEY SAW YOU HANGED!
YOU SEE, YOU REALLY ARE DEAD!
CUTE, STUART CUTE. BUT GET TO THE BOTTOM LINE. WHY?
"IN 1945 DURING WORLD WAR II, THERE EXISTED A CLEVER, CUNNING, BRILLIANT MAN WHO WAS ALSO A SPY FOR THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT.
HE WAS KNOWN AS THE "JEWELER" BECAUSE HE STOLE SECRET FORMULAS FROM THE AMERICANS AND TRANSCRIBED THEM, IN CODE ONTO THE FACES OF DIAMONDS SO THAT THEY COULD NEVER BE DESTROYED. THAT MAN WAS MY FATHER.
TOWARD THE END OF THE WAR HE CAME BY A FORMULA THAT WOULD ASSURE GERMANY'S VICTORY THE FORMULA FOR MAKING A HYDROGEN BOMB: HE INSCRIBED IT ONTO THE FACE OF A CAT'S-EYE DIAMOND. BUT BEFORE HE COULD LEAVE THE COUNTRY, HE REALIZED THAT HE WAS BEING FOLLOWED...
HE DUCKED INTO A SMALL PET SHOP AND SURREPTITIOUSLY TAPED THE DIAMOND TO THE INSIDE OF THE COLLAR OF A BEAUTIFUL PERSIAN CAT...
"JUST OUTSIDE THE PET SHOP, HE WAS PICKED UP BY THE FBI...
...BUT SINCE HE WAS CLEAN, TWENTY-FOUR HOURS LATER HE WAS RELEASED..."
3

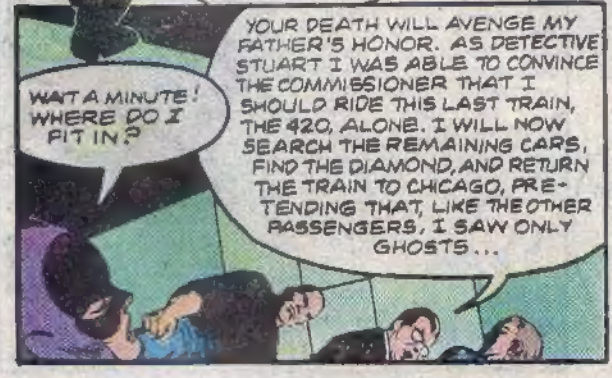
"HE RETURNED IMMEDIATELY TO THE PET STORE. THERE HE FOUND A SIGN POSTED ON THE DOOR--
GONE TO CHICAGO FOR CAT SHOW
"AS HE LEFT THE SHOP, HE SAW THE PROPRIETOR HEADING TOWARD THE TRAIN STATION, AN ANIMAL CAGE BENEATH HIS ARM!...
"... THE PERSIAN CAT WAS GONE!
"MY FATHER FOLLOWED HIM TO THE STATION, BOARDED, WAITED UNTIL THE MAN WAS NAPPING, THEN STOLE THE CAT. THE MAN AWOKE AND GAVE CHASE. MY FATHER ATTEMPTED TO ESCAPE BETWEEN THE MOVING CARS..."
"A SHORT FIGHT ENSUED ATOP ONE OF THE CARS, DURING WHICH MY FATHER WAS KNOCKED OVER THE EDGE TO HIS DEATH!
"THE MAN WHO KILLED HIM, SELINA KYLE, WAS YOUR FATHER!"
NOTHING WAS FOUND ON MY FATHER'S BODY, NO ID, NO MONEY, NO DIAMOND! THE NEXT WEEK GERMANY FELL TO THE ALLIES. MY FATHER HAD DIED IN DISGRACE IN THE EYES OF HIS COUNTRYMEN! I MIGRATED TO AMERICA AS A BOY. MY WHOLE LIFE HAS BEEN DEDICATED TO AVENGING MY FATHER!
I BEGAN AN ATTEMPT TO RECOVER THE DIAMOND, KNOWING MY FATHER'S PROPENSITY FOR HIDING THE INSCRIBED JEWEL DURING DANGER AND COMING BACK LATER TO RECOVER IT.
FIRST I TOOK A JOB ON THE RAILROAD, THINKING I COULD SEARCH THE TRAIN HE'D TRAVELED ON...
BUT THEN I DISCOVERED THAT THAT TRAIN HAD BEEN DISSEMBLED AND THE CARS FROM IT USED ON THE FOUR SEPARATE AMTRAK TRAINS THAT RUN THE CHICAGO ROUTE TODAY. SO I JOINED THE GOTHAM POLICE FORCE. MY PLANS WERE SIMPLY TO "KIDNAP" EACH TRAIN, ONE AT A TIME...
NATURALLY, AS DETECTIVE SERGEANT STUART, I MADE SURE I WAS ASSIGNED TO THE CASE OF THE "VANISHING TRAINS"...
I WOULD THEN CHECK EACH CAR THOROUGHLY AND SEND IT ON ITS WAY, PASSENGERS UNHARMED, NOTHING SEEMINGLY STOLEN!
I'M STILL WAITING...
HM...?
4

AH YES! HOW DID I MAKE THE TRAINS "VANISH" INTO THIN AIR?
IT ISN'T HARD, REALLY, WHEN YOU KNOW HOW!
SO QUIT GLOATING AND TELL ME!


1 "THE SECRET IS IN THAT SMALL TUNNEL I SHOWED YOU IN THE FILM.
REAL TRAIN
TUNNEL
HOLOGRAPH TRAIN
3 "THE TRAIN SEEN EXITING THE TUNNEL IS A HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTION TURNED TO THE SAME SPEED AS THE REAL TRAIN. A REAL TRAIN ENTERS, A "GHOST" TRAIN EXITS!
2 "FOR AS THE REAL TRAIN ENTERS THE TUNNEL MOUTH, IT'S IMMEDIATELY SIDETRACKED INTO AN UNDERGROUND PASSAGE..."
REAL TRAIN
Amtrak


WHEN THE HOLOGRAPH IS TURNED OFF, THE TRAIN APPEARS TO VANISH!
I SEE. CLEVER. AND THE "GHOSTS" ON BOARD ARE HOLOGRAPHS TOO?
EXACTLY, AS ARE THE TOMBSTONES OUTSIDE THE TRAIN WINDOW. OH, AND ALSO THE "NOOSE" THAT "HANGED" YOU!

UH-HUH... AND HOW EXACTLY WAS I STRANGLED?
NERVE GAS, THE SAME AS THE OTHER PASSENGERS. SORRY ABOUT THE HEADACHE AND SLIGHT MEMORY LOSS, BUT WE DO HAVE TO COVER OUR LITTLE TRACKS.
AND NOW I'LL BID YOU ADIEU, SELINA KYLE...


WAIT A MINUTE! WHERE DO I FIT IN?
YOUR DEATH WILL AVENGE MY FATHER'S HONOR. AS DETECTIVE STUART I WAS ABLE TO CONVINCE THE COMMISSIONER THAT I SHOULD RIDE THIS LAST TRAIN, THE 420, ALONE. I WILL NOW SEARCH THE REMAINING CARS, FIND THE DIAMOND, AND RETURN THE TRAIN TO CHICAGO, PRETENDING THAT, LIKE THE OTHER PASSENGERS, I SAW ONLY GHOSTS...

AFTER THAT, I'LL TAKE THE DIAMOND WITH ITS FORMULA TO GERMANY, WHERE MY FATHER'S NAME WILL BE VINDICATED AND GERMANY WILL RISE ONCE AGAIN WITH THE FOURTH REICH!
5

WELL, SELINA, OLD GIRL, YOU DO GET MIXED UP WITH SOME GOOFBALLS! AND IF YOU DON'T GET UNTIED FROM HERE BY THE TIME STUART FINDS THAT DIAMOND, HE'S NOT GOING TO BE THE ONLY ONE WITH A SPLIT PERSONALITY!
TWO HOURS LATER...
I FOUND IT! I FOUND IT! START THE TRAIN! WE LEAVE IMMEDIATELY!
AND AS THE 420 ROARS DOWN THE TRACK...
FAREWELL, MISS KYLE! SORRY YOU WERE TOO TIED UP TO JOIN US IN CHICAGO!
(HEH-HEH!) THE WHEELS PASSED RIGHT OVER HER! GOODBYE, CATWOMAN! HELLO, GERMANY...
--A BRILLIANT, NEW, POWERFUL GERMANY!
LYLE, PETE, I WANT YOU TO--
WHA--??
NO!
I'LL TAKE THE DIAMOND, STUART, IF YOU DON'T MIND...
B-BUT THE TRAIN! I-I SAW IT CRUSH YOU!
COME NOW, YOU DON'T THINK YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE CAPABLE OF MAKING A HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGE, DO YOU? I HAD PLENTY OF TIME TO RIG YOUR VIDEO CAMERAS WHILE YOU SEARCHED FOR YOUR PRECIOUS DIAMOND...
NOT AFTER ALL I'VE BEEN THROUGH TO GET IT!
YOU'LL NOT TAKE IT FROM ME, CATWOMAN!
6

THE 420 ROARS OUT OF STUART'S SECRET UNDERGROUND PASSAGE INTO THE DAY-LIGHT...
Amtrak
GIVE IT UP, STUART. YOU CAN'T ESCAPE, THERE'S NOWHERE TO GO...
SUDDENLY...
MY GOD! ANOTHER TRAIN COMING FROM THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION! WE'LL BE KILLED!
YOU IDIOT! YOU'VE SHUNTED US ONTO THE WRONG TRACK!
NO! NO! I CAN'T DIE! NOT NOW!
STUART, DON'T! WAIT!
AS THE 420 FLIES BY THE SWITCH, CATWOMAN'S CAT-O-NINE TAILS LASHES OUT AND--
IF I CAN PUT THAT OTHER TRAIN ON THE TRACK NEXT TO US...
THE SWITCH IS MADE... BUT THE APPROACHING TRAIN FINDS A NEW TARGET...
NOOOOOOO!
MY LEG! BROKEN IN THE FALL!
C-CAN'T MOVE!
FAREWELL, STUART...
...AND THANKS, DAD, FOR SAVING THE WORLD THE FIRST TIME... I'M GLAD I COULD REPAY THE FAVOR!